

## Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 TRSE-00 NEA-10 /021 R

DRAFTED BY INR/RNA/NE:AAVACCARO:CA  
APPROVED BY INR/RNA:PHSTODDARD  
SSM-CWKONTOS  
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION  
SSMTREASURY

-----066493 061411Z /44

R 052158Z DEC 77  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO USMISSION SINAI  
INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY DOHA  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
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LONDON FOR KINSOLVING

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OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 456 - DECEMBER 5, 1977

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. REJECTIONIST SUMMIT. A WALKOUT BY THE IRAQI DELEGATION SEEMS TO HAVE SET BACK HOPES OF FORMING A UNIFIED FRONT OPPOSED TO A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. LIBYAN OFFICIALS

SAID THE MEETING WOULD RESUME LATER TODAY WHEN THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE WOULD BE SIGNED BY THE FIVE PARTICIPANTS--

PRESUMABLY LIBYA, SYRIA, PDRY, ALGERIA, AND THE PLO.  
A PRESS REPORT THAT LIBYA, SYRIA, ALGERIA AND PDRY HAD PRIVATELY DECIDED AT LAST NIGHT'S SESSION TO BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH EGYPT REMAINS UNCONFIRMED.

2. AS CONFERENCE HOST, LIBYA EXERTED CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE HARDLINE ARABS AND THOSE WHO WISHED TO MAINTAIN SOME DIPLOMATIC FLEXIBILITY. ITS EFFORT, HOWEVER, APPARENTLY FOUNDERED ON SYRIA'S:

(A) CONTINUED DISPUTE WITH IRAQ;

(B) UNWILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT A CAMPAIGN AGAINST SADAT OUT OF APPARENT FEAR THIS WOULD DRIVE HIM TO MAKE A SEPARATE SETTLEMENT, AND DAMASCUS' DESIRE TO BENEFIT IF SADAT DOES REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL;

(C) UNWILLINGNESS TO ABANDON THE CONCEPT OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

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3. THE PALESTINIAN HARDLINE GROUPS WHICH APPARENTLY FELT THAT THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS IN TRIPOLI WERE NOT ADOPTING A FIRM ENOUGH POSITION PERSUADED THE MORE MODERATE PLO TO ISSUE A JOINT COMMUNIQUE IN WHICH:

--ALL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS WERE REJECTED.

--THEY DEMANDED THAT A REJECTIONIST FRONT BE ESTABLISHED AND CONDEMNED ANY ARAB PARTY WHICH DID NOT JOIN THE FRONT

--THEY CALLED FOR THE BOYCOTT OF EGYPT.

MODERATE PLO LEADERS INCLUDING ARAFAT AND PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN FAHUM WILL FIND LITTLE COMFORT IN THIS HARD APPROACH. ARAFAT DID NOT PUBLICLY ASSOCIATE HIMSELF WITH THE STATEMENT. IN DAMASCUS, FAHUM OBSERVED THAT ANY SUCH RESOLUTION WAS NOT BINDING UNLESS RATIFIED BY THE PNC OR THE PALESTINE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

(CONFIDENTIAL)

4. USSR. SOVIET MEDIA ALL BUT IGNORED THE TRIPOLI MEETING OVER THE WEEKEND. THE SOVIETS, HOWEVER, ARE ALMOST CERTAINLY DISTRESSED AT THE WRANGLING AMONG SADAT'S CRITICS AND AT THEIR FAILURE TO COME TO ANY AGREED POSITION. SOVIET COMMENT AT THE OPENING OF THE PROCEEDINGS INDICATED THAT MOSCOW HOPED THE MEETING WOULD DEMONSTRATE UNITY AGAINST SADAT'S INITIATIVES. TASS ON DECEMBER 2,

FOR LE, REPLAYED PDFLP CHIEF HAWATIMAH'S CALL FOR A MILITANT UNITED FRONT AMONG SADAT'S CRITICS AND THE PLO, AND RADIO MOSCOW STATED THAT THE TASK IN TRIPOLI WAS ADOPTION OF "PRACTICAL MEASURES" TO COUNTER EFFORTS TO FORCE A "CAPITULATIONIST" SETTLEMENT ON THE ARABS. NEVERTHELESS, MOSCOW MAY ALSO BE BREATHING A SIGH OF RELIEF THAT THE MEETING HAS THUS FJ AVOIDED ENDORSEMENT

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OF EXTREMIST POSITIONS THAT WOULD HAVE COMPLICATED THE KREMLIN'S HOPE OF FOCUSING SETTLEMENT EFFORTS ON GENEVA.

5. CONCERN ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, IN FACT, EMERGED MORE CLEARLY IN MOSCOW'S LATEST COMMENT ON THE CAIRO TALKS. THEIR PRINCIPAL FEAR SEEMS TO BE THAT THE EMERGING ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN BILATERAL DIALOGUE MAY PRESAGE A TURN AWAY FROM THE GENEVA FORUM AS THE VENUE FOR SETTLEMENT EFFORTS AND AN UNDERMINING OF THE RECENTLY RENEWED SOVIET HOPE FOR DEVELOPING GREATER SOVIET-US PARALLELISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

6. THUS, PRAVDA, ON DECEMBER 4, IN THE FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE USSR'S REJECTION OF SADAT'S INVITATION TO CAIRO:

(A) WARNED THAT THE TALKS ARE AIMED AT UNDERMINING GENEVA THROUGH NEGOTIATION OF "SEPARATE DEALS;"

(B) STATED THAT THE USSR COULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN "SUCH UNSEEMLY DEEDS;" AND

(C) CALLED FOR "VIGOROUS" ACTION TO RESUME GENEVA.

7. MEANWHILE, IN A MORE RESTRAINED APPROACH VETERAN US WATCHER VALENTIN ZORIN ON RADIO MOSCOW'S ENGLISH SERVICE TOLD US LISTENERS ON DECEMBER 3 THAT:

(A) NO UNDERSTANDING REACHED IN CAIRO CAN BRING PEACE UNLESS IT GETS SUPPORT FROM THE USSR AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES;

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(B) SETTLEMENT HOPES WILL BE SLIM IF THE RESULTS OF THE CAIRO TALKS "MOVE AWAY" FROM THE JOINT US-SOVIET STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST; AND

(C) THE ONLY WAY TO SOLVE THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM IS TO

RETURN TO THE GENEVA FORUM.

IN ADDITION, THE SOVIETS, THROUGH ZORIN, HINTED FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT SADAT'S INITIATIVES WERE UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT US KNOWLEDGE AND REPRESENTED A THREAT TO US INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

8. EGYPT. EMBASSY CAIRO REPORTS THAT, IN EGYPT, SUPPORT FOR THE SADAT INITIATIVE REMAINS ALMOST UNANIMOUS. SOME EGYPTIANS FEAR IT MAY BE BASED, HOWEVER, ON EXAGGERATED EXPECTATIONS OF WHAT ISRAEL IS PREPARED TO CONCEDE.

9. MEANWHILE, PREPARATIONS FOR THE CAIRO CONFERENCE CONTINUE. EGYPT YESTERDAY NAMED THE MEMBERS OF ITS THREE-MAN DELEGATION TO THE CAIRO CONFERENCE: UN AMBASSADOR MEGUID WILL HEAD THE TEAM, WHICH WILL ALSO INCLUDE USAMA AL-BAZ AND GENERAL TAHA MAGDOUB. EGYPT WILL REPORTEDLY PRESENT A WORKING PAPER CONTAINING "COMPREHENSIVE EGYPTIAN VIEWS" TO THE CONFERENCE WHICH WILL ALSO INCLUDE A "VISUALIZATION" OF THE SHAPE OF A FINAL SETTLEMENT. CAIRO MENA QUOTED AN OFFICIAL FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE AS REITERATING, NEVERTHELESS, THAT THE CONFERENCE'S BASIC GOAL WILL BE TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR GENEVA TO RECONVENE AND TO RESOLVE QUESTIONS REGARDING THE VARIOUS GENEVA DELEGATIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE ISRAELI DAILY HAARETZ REPORTED THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD SUBMIT TO EGYPT A DETAILED QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT THE ISSUES INVOLVING THE CONFERENCE WHICH REMAIN UNCLEAR.

10. IN A FURTHER FIRM DEMONSTRATION OF SADAT'S  
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DETERMINED PEACE STRATEGY, EGYPT HAS RECALLED ITS AMBASSADORS AND MILITARY ATTACHES IN MOSCOW, DAMASCUS, BAGHDAD, ALGIERS, AND ADEN BACK TO CAIRO "ON CONSULTATION." A HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD REMAIN IN CAIRO INDEFINITELY. HE ALSO STATED THAT ALTHOUGH THEY WOULD NOT FORMALLY BE WITHDRAWN, HE WAS SURE THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED WOULD RECOGNIZE THE ACTION AS A SIGNAL OF EGYPTIAN DISPLEASURE.

THE DECEMBER 4 ISSUE OF AL-AHRAM REPORTED THE RECALL OF AMBASSADORS WITH THE COMMENT THAT IT IS CLEAR MOSCOW IS DIRECTING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNTRIES MEETING IN TRIPOLI. THE COMMENTARY FURTHER ACCUSED THE SOVIETS OF SEEKING TO ASSERT THEIR INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST BY DIVIDING THE ARAB WORLD.

11. THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TO SYRIA HAS EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVES, ACCORDING TO AN EGYPTIAN DIPLOMAT IN DAMASCUS. HE

ALSO SAID THAT:

(A) SYRIAN REACTION APPEARED TO BE SURPRISINGLY MODERATE AND SYRIANS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR GOOD WISHES FOR SADAT'S INITIATIVES.

(B) EGYPTIAN EMBASSY OFFICERS CONTINUE TO HAVE COMPLETE ACCES TO THE SYRIAN LEADERSHIP.

(C) A BILATERAL PEACE AGREEMENT BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL, IN HIS OPINION, WOULD BE A DISASTER FOR THE ARAB WORLD AND SUBJECT TO RENUNCIATION BY ANY SUBSEQUENT EGYPTIAN REGIME.

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THE DIPLOMAT EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE US WOULD WORK TO ACHIEVE A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT AND TO MAKE US SUPPORT FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT CLEAR. HE SUGGESTED ADIRECT REPORT TO PRESIDENT ASSAD FOLLOWING THE CAIRO CONFERENCE AS A MEANS OF AVOIDING DISTORTION. (SECRET/NOFORN)

12. PLO. SADAT'S UNILATERAL INITIATIVES HAVE PLACED THE PLO, AND PARTICULARLY ARAFAT, IN A QUANDARY. AT STAKE FOR THE PLO IS ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH KEY ARAB ACTORS AND BENEFACTORS. FOR THE MOMENT, THE PLO HAS CAUTIOUSLY ALIGNED ITSELF WITH SYRIA, WHILE ATTEMPTING TO PRESERVE ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH EGYPT.

13. THE STRONG PLO CRITICISM OF SADAT'S ACTIONS AND ITS REFUSAL TO ATTEND THE CAIRO CONFERENCE SEEM TO DERIVE FROM SEVERAL INTERRELATED CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) ARAFAT'S LONGSTANDING DISTRUST OF SADAT;

(B) THE FEAR, REINFORCED BY SADAT'S FAILURE PUBLICLY TO MENTION THE PLO INRECENT WEEKS, THAT IT MAY BE LEFT ON THE SIDELINES WHILE SADAT AND NON-PLO PALESTINIANS NEGOTIATE FOR THE PALESTINIANS AND THUS UNDERMINE THE PLO'S CLAIM TO BE THE SOLE PALESTINIAN SPOKESMAN;

(C) CONCERN LEST THE PLO'S EFFORTS IN RECENT MONTHS TO MODERATE ITS MIDEAST POLICY MAY ULTIMATELY PROVE TO HAVE BEEN FOR NAUGHT;

(D) ARAFAT'S INABILITY TO MAKE MAJOR DECISIONS AND THE PRESSURES ON HIM FROM WITHIN THE PLO, WHICH MAKE IT POLITICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO GET ON SADAT'S BAND-WAGON.

14. MOST SIGNIFICANT IN TERMS OF PLO CALCULATIONS,

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HOWEVER, IS THE RELATIONSHIP WITH SYRIA. SINCE THE RAPPROCHEMENT LAST SUMMER AFTER LEBANON'S CIVIL WAR, THE PLO SEES SYRIA AS THE ARAB STATE WHOSE ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PEACE PROCESS MOST CLOSELY PARALLEL ITS OWN. THIS SHARED OUTLOOK IS ALSO SEEN AS A MEANS OF ASSURING THAT PALESTINIAN INTERESTS ARE PROTECTED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, PLO LEADERS ARE AWARE THAT THE SYRIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON--THE PLO'S LAST MAJOR REDOUBT--COULD BE USED AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS IF THEY DEVIATE TOO FAR FROM THE SYRIAN POSITION.

15. IN THE WAKE OF SADAT'S INITIATIVE, HOWEVER, THE SYRIAN-PLO CONNECTION APPEARS TO HAVE HEIGHTENED THE PLO'S PREDICAMENT. ARAFAT HAS TRADITIONALLY MANEUVERED TO PLAY ONE ARAB STATE AGAINST ANOTHER IN ORDER TO KEEP THE PLO FROM FALLING UNDER THE DOMINATION OF ANY ONE STATE. SINCE SADAT'S INITIATIVE IS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE PLO, THE PLO IS WORRIED THAT ITS NEED FOR SYRIAN SUPPORT WILL GIVE SYRIA MORE LEVERAGE OVER IT. PLO SPOKESMAN LABADI COMMENTED TO LE MONDE THAT "SADAT'S NEW POLICY IS FORCING ON US AN ALLIANCE (WITH SYRIA) WHICH WE FEAR ABOVE ALL."

16. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, AND DESPITE PLO PUBLIC CRITICISM OF SADAT'S NEW POLICY, ARAFAT IS AWARE OF THE PLO'S CONTINUING NEED FOR SADAT AND HAS ATTEMPTED TO AVOID A BREAK WITH HIM. STRONG INDICATIONS OF THIS POLICY ARE LABADI'S REMARK TO LE MONDE THAT ARAFAT DOES NOT WANT TO BURN HIS BRIDGES WITH CAIRO AND ARAFAT'S FAILURE TO PUBLICLY CRITICIZE SADAT DIRECTLY. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, ARAFAT'S GESTURES TOWARD CAIRO DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE IMPRESSED THE EGYPTIANS. MOREOVER, ARAFAT'S EFFORTS TO STRADDLE THE FENCE BETWEEN SYRIA  
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AND EGYPT SEEM TO BE HAVING A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON HIS POSITION AS PLO LEADER.

17. IN FACT, THE INTERNAL BICKERING THAT HAS BEEN BREWING SINCE SADAT'S DRAMATIC PEACE POLICY EMERGED APPARENTLY CAME TO A HEAD YESTERDAY AT THE TRIPOLI CONFERENCE. A KUWAITI NEWSPAPER REPORTED THAT A HEATED INTRA-PALESTINIAN DEBATE HAD CULMINATED IN A CALL BY SOME OF THE PALESTINIANS, REPORTEDLY INCLUDING NO. 2 PLO LEADER SALAH KHLAF, FOR ARAFAT'S RESIGNATION. BEFORE TEMPER COOLED, ARAFAT WAS SAID TO HAVE THREATENED TO LEAVE LIBYA AND BOYCOTT THE MEETING.

18. WE DO NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS INTERNAL DISSIDENCE POSES ANY SIGNIKCANT DANGER TO ARAFAT'S LEADERSHIP OVER THE SHORT TERM. RATHER , T APPEARS TO REFLECT DIFFERENCES OF OPINIONS AMONG DISPARATE FATAH ELEMENTS THAT HABITUALLY BECOME SHARPER WHEN THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT IS UNDER SEVERE STRESS. THIS DISSIDENCE, HOWEVER, COULD KEEP ARAFAT FROM MAKING ANY NEW DEPARTURES IN PLO POLICY. HIS USUAL RESPONSE IN SUCH SITUATVNS IS CAUTIOUSLY TO KEEP IN STEP WITH MAJORITY SENTIMENT IN THE PLO, WHILE ATTEMPTING TO PLACATE THE VARIOUS FACTIONS AND TO AVOID DECISIONS THAT COULD ALIENATE MAJOR GROUPS. ARAFAT MAY HOPE THAT UN SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM'S PROPOSED CONFERENCE--ON NEUTRAL GROUND AT THE UN--MAY OFFER A SOLUTION, HOWEVER TEMPORARY OR PARTIAL, TO THE PLO'S QUANDARY. (SECRET)

19. EFFECTIVE TODAY JERUSALEM AND PARIS ARE BEING INCLUDED AS RECIPIENTS OF THE INTSUM. VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** ADS  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** INR/RNA/NE:AAVACCARO:CA  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** 11652 XGDS-2  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Expiration:**  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Retention:** 0  
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**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
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**TAGS:** PINR, EG, IS  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009